

Predicting the Future of Law Practice

Ann Grillo



The world changes at an ever-accelerating rate. The globalization of society, the mapping of the human genome and the dawning of the information age were once mere speculations. Other seismic changes are only now beginning and won't be realized for years. Preparing the next generation of lawyers and leaders for a world we cannot yet imagine is the great challenge to legal education. Providing the scholarly discourse to enable today's students to better understand and meet tomorrow's challenges is the task of today's academic community.

I am energized by the challenges facing legal education and am excited about how the law school is addressing them. Some of the articles in this issue of *JD* illustrate these challenges and the School of Law's responses. The conferences, meetings and symposia described in the next few pages exemplify our efforts to cast light on the problems of today and tomorrow.

To better educate tomorrow's leaders, we recently have overhauled the required curriculum, consolidating our required courses to strengthen our legal writing and research program and to give students the opportunity to choose an area of emphasis earlier in their law school careers. We are increasing our efforts to place students in carefully structured externships, and graduates in judicial clerkships. We have initiated a program aimed directly at better preparing student leaders.

As you can see from the cover photo, the construction of the new building is progressing well. This state-of-the-art facility will provide tools important to the fulfillment of our mission. Perhaps paradoxically, essential tools to prepare the next generation of lawyers remain what they have always been—developing sound judgment,

sharpening skills of analysis and communication and enhancing appreciation of the basic principles and processes of the law. The School of Law remains committed to these traditional tasks and to meeting whatever challenges the future may present.

The long-standing commitment to excellence is best exemplified by you, our graduates (some of whom are profiled in this issue), who continue to model for the next generation success as lawyers and citizens—and who continue to give back to the community and to the School of Law. Indeed one of the most pleasant aspects of serving as dean is the opportunity to work directly with faculty, staff, students and alumni, many of whom I have taught.

Educating the next generation of lawyers will require changes in what we do. We must look outward at changes in the world, at social change, at changes in law practice, and accommodate our educational, scholarly and service missions to those changes. But, equally important, it will require that we continue to look inward, that we continue the self-examination that allows us to do better what we have always done well.

"Educating the next generation of lawyers will require changes in what we do."

Karen H. Rothenberg, JD, MPA
Dean and Marjorie Cook Professor of Law